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E.O. 12065: GDS 04/22/86 (PRYCE, WILLIAM T.) DR-P
TAGS: PINT, MX
SUBJECT: POLITICAL REFORM AND THE MEXICAN COMMUNIST
PARTY (PCM) (POST REPORTING PROGRAM)

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT)

2. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY. THE PCM CURRENTLY APPEARS TO BE UNDERGOING A NEW STAGE OF METAMORPHOSIS, EMERGING FROM A 33 YEAR COCCON OF ILLEGITIMACY INTO A YET UNCLEARLY SHAPED NEW LIFE. MEXICO'S POLITICAL REFORM DURING THE LOPEZ PORTILLO ADMINISTRATION HAS PROVIDED THE LATEST CATALYST IN THE PARTY'S EVOLUTION. THE PCM-LED COALITION WON 5 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN THE JULY 1979 ELECTIONS TO BECOME THE SECOND LARGEST OPPOSITION GROUPING. ITS SUBSEQUENT PARLIAMENTARY PERFORMANCE WON MIXED RATINGS. PARTICIPATION AS A LEGAL PARTY HAS RESULTED IN SOME PREVIOUSLY EXISTING DISPUTES BEING HEIGHTENED AS WELL AS IN THE CREATION OF NEW PROBLEMS. EXTERNAL EVENTS, SUCH AS THE SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN, IMPACT ON THE PARTY'S INTERNAL PROCEDURES AND ITS ABILITY TO UNIFY THE MEXICAN LEFT. PARTY MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCING HAVE INCREASED, ALONG WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT WHERE ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITY SHOULD BE FOCUSED. THE PCM NOW STANDS AT ANOTHER CROSSROADS AND THE PARTY CONGRESS IN SEPTEMBER WILL ATTEMPT TO CHART THE PCM'S NEAR TERM PATH. THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP AND ITS POLICY OF COMMITMENT TO ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION, ESCHEWING OF ARMED REVOLUTION IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, INDEPENDENCE FROM OUTSIDE DIRECTION AND INCREASED INTERNAL DEMOCRACY IN THE PARTY IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE. END SUMMARY.

3. BRIEF PARTY HISTORY. MEXICAN COMMUNISM AND ITS ORGANIZATION IN THE PCM, HAS PASSED THROUGH VARIOUS STAGES FROM ITS INCEPTION IN 1919 UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE AMERICAN FRANK SEAMAN AND THE INDIAN MANABENDRA NATH ROY. DURING THE CARDENAS ADMINISTRATION (1934-1940), THE PCM, AND MEXICAN LEFTISM IN GENERAL, ENJOYED ITS CLOSEST INFLUENCE ON AND RELATION WITH THE GOVERNING PRI PARTY. DURING THE WAR YEARS THE PARTY, DOMINATED BY CPUSA LEADER EARL BROWDER, SUBORDINATED WORKER/PEASANT DEMANDS TO THE ALLIED EFFORT. HOWEVER WITH THE INCEPTION OF THE COLD WAR AND THE STRAINS INTRODUCED BY IT, THE PCM AND THE MEXICAN LEFT UNDERWENT NUMEROUS INTERNAL DIVISIONS. THE MAJOR SPLIT AFFECTING LEFTIST UNITY OCCURRED IN 1948 WHEN LABOR LEADER VICENTE LOMBARDO TOLEDANO FORMED HIS OWN POPULAR (LATER POPULAR SOCIALIST) PARTY, CREATING TACTICAL, IDEOLOGICAL AND PERSONALISTIC DIFFERENCES WHICH CONTINUE TO SPLINTER THE MARXIST LEFT. WITH THE OVERTHROW OF

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LONGTIME LEADER DIONISIO ENCINA IN THE EARLY 60'S, CURRENT SECGEN MARTINEZ VERDUGO AND OTHER PCM LEADERS GRADUALLY HAVE LED THE PARTY FROM ITS STALINIST NADIR TO A CURRENT POSITION AS THE THIRD LARGEST POLITICAL FORCE (IN PARLIAMENTARY TERMS) IN MEXICO. THE PCM CONTINUES TO WORK FOR LEFTIST UNITY DESPITE DIVISIONS CAUSED BY OUTSIDE EVENTS SUCH AS THE 1968 SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA OR THE 1979 INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN AND THE TEMPTATION AMONG SOME MARXISTS FOR CUBAN-INSPIRED MODELS OF URBAN AND RURAL GUERRILLA WARFARE RATHER THAN ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION, WHICH IS THE ROUTE CHOSEN BY THE LEADERSHIP.

4. POLITICAL REFORM AND 1979 ELECTIONS. EX-PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S ADOPTION OF A STRONG THIRD WORLD FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION AND RHETORIC FOR MEXICO WAS PARTIALLY DESIGNED TO UNDERCUT CRITICISMS FROM THE MEXICAN LEFT THAT GOM WAS A US PUPPET. HOWEVER, IT MAY HAVE HELPED ACCLIMATE MEXICAN PUBLIC OPINION FOR A GREATER VARIETY OF LEGAL POLITICAL ORIENTATIONS DOMESTICALLY. PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO, SENSING THE NEED TO REVITALIZE THE LEGITIMACY AND VIVACITY OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM WHICH HAS GIVEN THE PRI A 50-YEAR MONOPOLIZATION OF POLITICAL POWER, AS WELL AS TO INDUCE LEFTIST PARTICIPATION INTO A NON-INSURRECTIONARY PATH WHICH GIVES THEM A LEGAL VOICE AND PLATFORM BUT EFFECTIVELY DENIES THEM POWER, ENACTED A POLITICAL REFORM ACT. MINORITY PARTIES ARE ENSURED A MINIMUM OF 25 PERCENT PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES AND THREE NEW PARTIES, INCLUDING THE PCM, GAINED "PERMANENT" REGISTRATION.

5. PCM LEADERSHIP HOPED TO AGGREGATE AS MANY UNREGISTERED LEFTIST PARTIES AS POSSIBLE INTO A COMMON FRONT TO CONTEST THE ELECTIONS. AN ELECTORAL FRONT WAS FORMED WITH THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISTS (PSR), THE MEXICAN POPULIST PARTY (PPM) AND SOCIALIST ACTION AND UNITY MOVEMENT (MAUS), BUT THE MEXICAN WORKERS (PMT) AND REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS (PRT) PARTIES OPTED OUT. WHATEVER EXPECTATIONS THE PCM MAY HAVE HAD FOR COOPERATION WITH THE LOMBARDIST POPULAR SOCIALISTS (PPS) FOUNDERED DUE TO IDEOLOGICAL AND PERSONALISTIC DIFFERENCES. THE ECHEVERRIA-SPONSORED, PRI-FINANCED

SOCIALIST WORKERS (PST), ALSO SEEKING REGISTRATION, WAS SIMILARLY UNINTERESTED IN COOPERATION. HOWEVER THE PCM-LED COALITION OF THE LEFT (COALICION IZQUIERDA) EMERGED AS THE SECOND LARGEST OPPOSITION AGGREGATION IN THE 1979 ELECTIONS, CAPTURING SLIGHTLY MORE THAN 5 PERCENT OF THE VOTE AND ELECTING 18 DEPUTIES (COMPARED TO THE LEADING OPPOSITION CENTER-RIGHT NATIONAL ACTION PARTY WITH 43 SEATS AND 11 PERCENT OF THE VOTE.) IN THE COALITION, THE PCM HAS 9 DEPUTIES; THE PPM, 5; THE PSR, 3 AND MAUS HAS ONE.

6. LEGISLATIVE PERFORMANCE. PCM PERFORMANCE DURING THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE 51ST LEGISLATURE (OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1979) RATED MIXED REVIEWS. PARTY/COALITION ORATORS WERE CREDITED WITH PRESENTING SEVERAL WELL DOCUMENTED, CRITICAL ANALYSES AND ACCUSATIONS OF GOM POLICY FAILURES, BUT MORE FREQUENTLY DELIVERED LONGWINDED, CANNED SPEECHES. CHAMBER PRESIDENT LUIS FARIAS TOLD EMBOFFS THAT HE HAD FOUND IT POSSIBLE TO WORK WITH THE PCM. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY SEVERAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER OPPOSITION PARTY DEPUTIES THAT PCM DEPUTIES PRESENTED A MIXED RECD IN COMMITTEE SESSIONS, SOMETIMES WORKING TO IMPROVE THE TECHNICAL QUALITY OF A BILL AND IN OTHER INSTANCES EITHER IGNORING COMMITTEE WORK OR ENGAGING IN DEMAGOGUERY. THE PCM ACHIEVED ITS GREATEST SUCCESS IN HAVING ITS POSITION

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ON UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY LEGISLATION APPROVED BY THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, ALTHOUGH THE SENATE SUBSEQUENTLY REJECTED IT AND THE CHAMBER UPHELD THE SENATE VERSION (WHICH FOLLOWED PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO'S INITIAL RECOMMENDATION.) OTHER PCM ACHIEVEMENTS WERE DECISIONS BY THE CHAMBER TO CONDUCT HEARINGS ON THE PCM'S LEGALIZATION OF ABORTION INITIATIVE AND ON ITS PROPOSAL FOR AN "ESCALA MOVIL" FOR WAGES (A FORM OF INDEXATION LINKING WAGES TO CHANGES IN CPI); HOWEVER NEITHER PROPOSAL IS SUPPORTED BY THE PRI OR MOST OTHER OPPOSITION PARTIES. THE PCM SEEMS COMMITTED (COOPTED?) TO THE PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS, DESPITE SOME INTERNAL CRITICISM THAT PARTY LEADERS HAVE BECOME "PROFESSIONAL PARLIAMENTARIANS." (COMMENT. SHORTLY AFTER THESE CRITICISMS BEGAN TO BE AIRED PUBLICLY, WE NOTE THAT MARTINEZ VERDUGO STEPPED DOWN AS PARTY PARLIAMENTARY COORDINATOR.)

7. PCM IN EVOLUTION. PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL REFORM HAS TRIGGERED A NUMBER OF CHANGES IN THE PARTY'S EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL POLICIES. THE DRIVE FOR REGISTRATION RESULTED IN A LARGE INCREASE IN PARTY MEMBERSHIP (NOW ESTIMATED AT OVER 100,000), BUT OF INDIVIDUALS NOT WELL INDOCTRINATED IN PARTY IDEOLOGY AND PROCEDURES. NEW MEMBERS QUESTION THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM AND THE SEEMING INDEPENDENCE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE TO FORMULATE PARTY POLICY WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH THE PARTY BASE ORGANIZATIONS. THE QUESTIONING ATTITUDE HAS TOUCHED OFF AN INTENSE DEBATE WITHIN THE PARTY ON THE SUBJECT OF INTERNAL DEMOCRACY, "FREEDOM OF INFORMATION," THE RIGHT TO LEGITIMIZE AND GIVE STATUS TO ORGANIZED "TENDENCIES" WITHIN THE PARTY, THE RIGHT TO PUBLISH DISSENTING OPINIONS IN THE PARTY NEWSPAPER OPOSICION, THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PARTY SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL REFORM, DEGREE OF COOPERATION WITH OTHER LEFTIST PARTIES, INCLUDING IDEA OF FORMATION OF A BROAD ELECTORAL FRONT OR MERGER WITH OTHER PARTIES TO FORM A NEW PARTY.

8. MANY OF THESE QUESTIONS WILL HAVE TO BE RESOLVED AT THE 19TH PARTY CONGRESS IN SEPTEMBER. IN THE MEANTIME, PARTY SECRETARY MARTINEZ VERDUGO AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION HAVE AGREED TO LET INDIVIDUALS PUBLISH THEIR OPINIONS IN OPOSICION BUT ONLY AS INDIVIDUALS AND NOT AS SPOKESMEN FOR A "TENDENCY." THE QUESTION OF PARTICIPATING IN THE ELECTION PROCESS APPEARS TO BE RESOLVED IN FAVOR OF CONTINUED PARTICIPATION AND THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP IS COMMITTED TO A POLICY OF FORGING BROADER ALLIANCES. HOWEVER MARTINEZ VERDUGO HAS ADMITTED THAT THE PARTY HAS COMMITTED MANY "ERRORS" IN THE PAST AND STATED THAT THERE WILL BE A REORGANIZATION OF THE PCM'S GOVERNING BODIES AT THE SEPTEMBER 1980 CONGRESS. (AN EXAMPLE OF ONE ERROR MIGHT BE THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION'S DECISION TO CONDEMN THE SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN, WHICH PROVOKED SOME INTERNAL CRITICISM THAT THE INITIAL DECISION SHOULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY THE FULL CENTRAL COMMITTEE. THIS POSITION PUT THE PCM AT ODDS WITH ITS COALITION ALLIES AND ALL OTHER LEFTIST PARTIES AND ALTHOUGH SUBSEQUENTLY APPROVED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE (NOT UNANIMOUSLY) WILL PROBABLY BE REVIEWED BY THE CONGRESS.

9. ANOTHER CHANGE BROUGHT ABOUT BY POLITICAL REFORM AND LEGALIZATION HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN THE PARTY'S INCOME. IN ADDITION TO THE PREVIOUS INCOME FROM MEMBERSHIP DUES, SALE OF ADVERTISING IN PARTY NEWSPAPER AND INCOME FROM THE PARTY'S BOOKSTORES AND WHATEVER GRANTS FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES THE PCM MAY RECEIVE, THE PARTY CAN NOW COUNT ON

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IS TOO CLOUDY TO HAZARD A GUESS, BUT FROM THE DEGREE OF
PUBLIC DEBATE, WE ANTICIPATE SOME LIBERALIZATION WILL
RESULT. (DRAFTED BY RICHARD THURMAN) FERCH

END OF MESSAGE

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